the close genetic similarity between the Asian and African wildcat, the Indian scientists may use the African wildcat in their studies."

(b) Does not arise.

**Forest Land for Development Project of Sabarimala**

2088. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any proposal for forest land for development project of Sabarimala situated in the Periyar Tiger Reserve, Kerala has been received by Government;

(b) if so, the details of land sought and the decision taken on the above proposal, as on today;

(c) whether there is any proposal submitted by the competent authority for sanction/clearance of a detailed road development project for Sabarimala; and

(d) if so, the action taken in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) A proposal for diversion of 12.675 hectares of forest land in Periyar Tiger Reserve for providing facilities to Sabarimala pilgrims has been received from the State Government of Kerala. The proposal has been recommended by the Standing Committee of National Board of Wildlife. As the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India has imposed restriction on use of forest land in National Parks and Sanctuaries, the user agency is required to obtain case-specific permission from the Hon'ble Court.

(c) and (d) Two other proposals for diversion of forest land for development of Nilakkal Base Camp for Sabarimala pilgrims were also received from the State Government of Kerala. In-principle approval under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 in respect of these proposals has also been granted by the Central Government subject to fulfilment of certain conditions. On the basis of part compliance of the conditions by the State Government, final approval for diversion of 60.14 hectares of forest land was granted in June, 2005 which includes 5.2 hectares for widening and upgradation of the existing road network and 2.42 hectares for additional road construction.